

IN THE DRAWINGS

The drawings stand objected to for the reasons set forth in sections 1 and 2 of the Office Action. In particular, the drawings are objected to for failing to show a figure wherein the pattern of hook material on the garment facing side of the absorbent article is different from the pattern on the wing structure. Claim 16 is cancelled and, thus, the objection to the drawings is moot.

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 27 were pending in the application. With this Amendment, claims 2, 3, and 16 have been cancelled.

Claims 1 through 27 were variously rejected under § 112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth in sections 4 through 8 of the Office Action. The claims have been variously amended to overcome the § 112 rejections.

Claims 1 through 12, 16 through 25, and 27 were rejected under § 103(a) as obvious in view of the EP '209 publication and Goulait '058. Claims 13 through 15 and 26 were rejected under § 103(a) as obvious in view of the combination of the EP '209 publication, Goulait '058, and Tanzer '069. Applicants respectfully submit that all of the remaining claims as amended and presented herein patentably distinguish over the cited combination of references, as discussed below.

As amended, claim 1 is drawn to embodiments wherein a pair of separate wings are each individually removable and attachable to the garment facing side of the absorbent article. Each wing has a body facing side of a hook compatible material and a garment facing side of hook material defined in a pattern over the surface thereof. Each wing is variably positionable on and removably attachable to the entirety of the garment facing side of the absorbent article. Once the wings are attached, generally the entire surface area of the garment facing side of the absorbent article and attached wings presents an overall pattern of hook material for attachment to the user's undergarment. This unique combination of elements offers various distinct advantages and is not rendered obvious by the combination of the EP '209 publication and Goulait '058.

The EP '209 publication describes various embodiments wherein integrally formed wings 9 are removable (only once) from the longitudinal edges of the absorbent article. In all of the embodiments of Figs. 1 through 8, the removable wings 9 are delineated by perforation lines 25. At paragraph 22 (column 5), the EP '209 reference describes that the wings "may be attached to the longitudinal edges 10 or 11 of the absorbent article by adhesive, snap, button, hook-and-loop" Regardless of the attachment device, the wings 9 are attached only at the longitudinal edges of the article.

The embodiment of Figs. 9a through 9c is described in paragraphs 42 and 43 of the reference. In this embodiment, the wing 19 is a separate unitary piece that defines both "wing" portions and is attached to the outer surface of the back sheet 2 by various means, including hook-and-loop material. However, none of these embodiments provide structure wherein separate wings are independently and variably positionable on, and removably attached to, the garment facing side of the absorbent article. When discussing individual wing embodiments of Figs. 1 through 8, the EP '209 reference expressly describes that the individual wings are attached along the longitudinal edges 10 and 11 of the absorbent article. The embodiment of Figs. 9a through 9c does not have individual wing segments.

With the present configuration according to claim 1, the individual wings are adjustable in both a transverse and longitudinal direction relative to the centerline of the absorbent article. In this way, the wings can be individually placed to accommodate different width undergarments, and so forth. For example, the wings may be spaced relatively close to the longitudinal centerline of the absorbent article so as to not fold around the undergarment and onto each other in use of the absorbent article. In this

configuration, the wings may simply fold around the edges of the undergarment and attach directly to the undergarment. This configuration may be desired by the user to eliminate bulk or thickness of the article. However, there may be situations wherein the wings are desired to fold completely around the undergarment and attach to each other. In this case, the wings may be positioned closer to the longitudinal edges of the absorbent article rather than to the longitudinal centerline of the article. The unique configuration of elements set forth in amended claim 1 allows for all of these possibilities.

As discussed, the EP '209 reference does not disclose or suggest individual, removable and variably positionable wings with the hook-and-loop fastening system set forth in claim 1. The secondary reference, Goulait '058, fails to supply the missing teaching or motivation to modify the EP '209 reference in accordance with amended claim 1. Fig. 5 of Goulait '058 discloses an embodiment wherein wings 24 include flap securement members 56, which may be hook-and-loop material. However, the flaps or wings 24 are not in any way removable or positionable relative to the body of the absorbent article.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited combination of references and is allowable. Claims 4 through 15 and 17 only further patentably define the invention of claim 1 and are thus allowable for at least the reasons claim 1 is allowable.

Independent claim 18 also calls for a pair of individually removable wings that are attachable to the garment facing side of the baffle. Each wing has a garment facing side comprising hook material and a body facing side comprising hook compatible

material. Each wing is variably positionable on and removably attachable to the garment facing side of the baffle. In this regard, the analysis set forth above with respect to claim 1 also applies to claim 18. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that claim 18 is also allowable over the cited combination of references. Claims 19 through 27 only further patentably define the invention of claim 18 and are thus also allowable.

With the present Amendment, applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience should he have any questions regarding this matter or require any additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

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